



**Division of
Science, Technology
& Innovation**

ADVANCED INDUSTRY CLUSTERS STUDY

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FROM DIVISION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION

Designated Contacts for this Procurement:

Primary Contact:	Jordan Taylor Sloan
Secondary Contact:	Matt Watson
Additional Contact:	Cheyenne Keppler

All contacts/inquiries shall be made by email to the following address:
nystar@esd.ny.gov.

APPLICATIONS DUE DATE AND TIME:
On or before **March 10, 2022** by 5:00 pm EST.
Applications must be emailed by this date and time.
Late applications cannot be accepted.

I. Introduction

The mission of Empire State Development (“ESD”) is to promote a vigorous and growing state economy, encourage business investment and job creation, and support diverse, prosperous local economies across New York State through the efficient use of loans, grants, tax credits, real estate development, marketing and other forms of assistance.

A. Project Summary

ESD has been designated by Governor Kathy Hochul to receive the EDA Statewide Planning Grant. ESD’s planning initiative will respond to the economic injury caused by the coronavirus pandemic and enable New York State to make its economy more resilient to future shocks.

ESD is launching a multi-module Advanced Industry Clusters Study that will provide ESD with current, market-grounded information about New York State’s strengths and opportunities for expansion to generate long-term follow-on economic growth. Conclusions and recommendations from the study will inform New York State agencies’ global industry attraction efforts, innovation ecosystem investments, site development investments, skills assessments, workforce development programming, and efficient leveraging of future Federal funding.

B. Request for Application Schedule

Item	Date
Release of Request for Applications	February 14, 2022
Deadline for Submission of Questions	February 23, 2022 by 5:00 PM EST
Deadline for ESD to Respond to Questions	February 25, 2022
Submission of Applications	March 10, 2022 by 5:00 PM EST
Anticipated Announcement of Selections	March 21, 2022
Anticipated Contract Start Date	April 1, 2022

II. Project

A. Program Goals and Objectives

Under this RFA, ESD anticipates selecting 1-3 applicants to execute three (3) Study Modules. Applicants may submit for more than one (1) Study Module. If Applicants are submitting for more than one (1) Study Module, Applicants must submit one (1) application for each Study Module.

- Study Module 1: Advanced Industry Clusters
Applicants are asked to submit a plan for identifying, mapping, and analyzing high-value, high-multiplier industry clusters across the State of New York. Applicants are expected to catalogue innovation and entrepreneurship assets supportive of each cluster and identify additional needs.

Applicants will then recommend high-impact cluster-based economic development activities for New York State and individual regions.
- Study Module 2: Supply Chain Analysis

Applicants are asked to submit a plan for a statewide supply chain and logistics assessment to identify areas for increased efficiencies and supply chain infill. Applicants are expected to catalog and submit status of current state and identify key gaps in the supply chain.

Applicants will then recommend high-impact supply chain activities for New York State and individual regions to strengthen logistic and efficiency efforts.

- **Study Module 3: Top Ten Emerging Technology Fields**

Applicants are asked to submit a plan to identify top ten (10) emerging technology fields for which New York State is well-positioned to advance a position of global leadership and generate related economic growth. Applicants are expected to explain conditions cultivating each technology field and current state-wide assets that are contributing to emergence.

Applicants will then recommend a strategy of high-impact activities to strengthen and leverage each of the ten (10) emerging technology fields.

For all Study Modules, Applicants must explain the proposed process to address the following:

- Composition;
- Contribution to the State's economy;
- Stage of development;
- Current degree of agglomeration and distribution of relevant activity throughout the State;
- The degree to which the State is or can be a global leader;
- And other pertinent information.

B. Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive grant proceeds from ESD, an applicant must be in good standing with the State of New York and ESD.

C. Grant Funding and Project Timeline

i. Grant Amount and Completion Dates

Grant funding is made possible through Governor Hochul's designation of Empire State Development (ESD) to receive the EDA Statewide Planning Grant.

Grant awards are as follows:

	Award Up To	Expected Completion Date
Study Module 1: Advanced Industry Clusters	\$ 275,000	October 2022
Study Module 2: Supply Chain Analysis	\$ 340,000	February 2023
Study Module 3: Top Ten Emerging Technology Fields	\$ 110,000	December 2023

ESD reserves the right to award grants in amounts greater or less than the above listed figures and/or at a varying schedule depending on the number and quality of applications received and other considerations set forth in this RFA. There is no cost-match requirement associated with this grant.

ii. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Eligible activities include but are not limited to:

- Marketing and outreach to increase awareness of the study(s)
- Planning and executing workshops and webinars (may be focused on a specific industry/technology area);
- Additional activities deemed relevant and approved by ESD.

The following limitations apply to this RFA:

- Indirect costs are PROHIBITED.
- Expenses must be relevant and justifiable to the project(s) outcome.

A budget template is included in this RFA. ESD has the right to review all expenses and deny the reimbursement of any expenses that are deemed ineligible.

D. Data Collection

Applicants awarded grant funding will be required to track and record information relevant to the success of this grant. Data will be made available to ESD as requested. Data points to be captured and tracked are at the discretion of ESD.

III. Application Information

Applicants must submit an application for consideration. Applicants may submit for more than one (1) Study Module. If Applicants are submitting for more than one (1) Study Module, Applicants must submit one (1) application for each Study Module.

Please provide a narrative that includes the following information in the following order using the headings listed below. Submitted applications are expected to be clearly written. If applications exceed the page limits and/or include materials not requested by the RFA, ESD will remove the extra pages and/or materials prior to the review. During the review process, applicant institutions may be requested to submit additional written documents to answer questions or provide clarification of issues raised during the review process.

Assemble the application in the following order:

1. Cover page
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary (max 1-page)
4. Proposal (5-page limit)
 - a. Applicant institution's experience and qualification
 - i. Demonstrate the knowledge, expertise and experience of executing quality research studies. Offer an action plan for accomplishing key priorities.
 - ii. If applicable, offer a list of strategic partners and how they strengthen the proposal.
 - b. Project readiness and workplan
 - i. Demonstrate staff's knowledge, ability and role. Include resumes and/or information of individuals that will be assigned.
 - ii. Provide a detailed workplan for each Study Module to be addressed.

- iii. If subcontractors will be utilized, provide a detailed plan identifying any and all subcontracting opportunities associated with this project and explain how Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (“MWBEs”) and Service-Disabled Veteran-owned Businesses (“SDVOBs”) would be utilized.
- c. Timeline
 - i. Provide details on all potential data points to tracked and timeline of project execution.
- d. Use of Funds
 - i. Clear and concise quote for the project that incorporates scope of work, project hours, hourly rate, individual(s) devoted to the project, and additional line items as needed.
- e. Sample of Previous Work and References
 - i. Please include 1-2 project samples that demonstrate aptitude and are relevant to the Study Modules addressed in the proposal.
 - ii. Please supply a minimum of two (2) references (including name and address of the organization, contact name, website, email address and telephone number) that can substantiate the quality of the Bidder’s work.

IV. Review Criteria and Process

ESD will balance individual application scores.

For the review of eligible applications, ESD has established the following criteria to be applied in accordance with the review process set forth in Section IV.B. In addition to addressing the review criteria stated below, refer to the proposal instructions in Section III of this RFA for specific items that must also be addressed.

A. Review Criteria

1. Ability to Perform Services (20 points)
 - a. Experience of the Applicant Institution and the staff proposed to execute the Study Module. (10 points)
 - b. How well the organization meets the qualification requirements addressed in this RFA. (5 points)
 - c. Access to data and resources to accomplish the Study Module. (5 points)
2. Knowledge of Advanced Industry Sectors (20 points)
 - a. Knowledge, experience and skills of the organization and the staff proposed to undertake advanced industry sector studies.
3. Project Readiness and Workplan (15 points)
 - a. Overall work/action plan. (5 points)
 - b. Measurable deliverables and completion dates. (10 points)
4. Use of Funds (15 points)
 - a. Quality of the applicant institution’s justification/rationale for the use of the requested funds.

5. Proposal Clarity (10 points)

- a. Quality of proposal's organization, clarity and adherence to page limitations.

6. References (10 points)

- a. Quality of references that can substantiate the quality of the Bidder's work to be considered for an award of this project.

7. Diversity Practices Scoring (10 points)

- a. ESD's Office of Contractor and Supplier Diversity will score each application for Diversity Practices. Up to 10 points will be awarded based upon the contents of the Diversity Practices Questionnaire Appendix D, submitted by each Respondent to the RFA.

B. Review Process

Reviewers may include ESD staff, staff from federal or other State agencies, and individuals selected from the science, business, and academic communities. The reviewers will adhere to the process described in this section and will apply the review criteria detailed above. ESD may limit the number of proposals a reviewer is required to evaluate. Each proposal will be reviewed and scored by at least three reviewers.

Scoring: Reviewers will independently evaluate and assign a preliminary score to proposals that have been accepted by ESD. The *preliminary scores* for a proposal will be combined to provide an *initial average score* for that proposal.

After the initial average scores are calculated, reviewers will convene as a group to review these preliminary scores and discuss the proposals in accordance with the review criteria. At the conclusion of the discussions, each reviewer will individually provide a *final score* for each proposal based upon the panel's discussions.

In the event that two or more proposals have the same final score, and the score is high enough for the applicants to be considered for funding, the review panel will hold an additional session to review only those affected proposals. The review panel will deliberate until there is a consensus regarding the selection.

ESD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. ESD may recall this RFA at any time prior to award announcement and may also reject proposals for deficiencies; waive technicalities, irregularities, and omissions; or solicit new proposals. ESD reserves the right to act in accordance with the best interests of the people of New York in its interpretation of this RFA.

Applicants and/or their surrogates are prohibited from contacting any ESD staff to advocate on behalf of a proposal submitted in response to this RFA. Violation of this restriction will disqualify an applicant's proposal from the competition.

V. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

All applications should be submitted via email to nystart@esd.ny.gov no later than March 10, 2022 by 5:00 PM. Your subject line should state: "[Name of Applicant] – RFA, Advanced Industry Clusters Study: [Study Module Name]".

VI. QUESTIONS

All questions, comments, requests for clarification or any other communication regarding this RFA must be submitted by email to nystar@esd.ny.gov no later February 23, 2022 by 5:00 PM. Your subject line should state: “[Name of Applicant] – RFA Inquiry, Advanced Industry Clusters Study”.

IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The issuance of this RFA and the submission of a response by an applicant or the acceptance of such a response by ESD does not obligate ESD in any manner. ESD reserves the right to:

- i. amend, modify or withdraw this RFA;
- ii. revise any requirement of this RFA;
- iii. require supplemental statements or information from any responsible party;
- iv. accept or reject any or all responses hereto;
- v. extend the deadline for submission of responses hereto;
- vi. negotiate potential contract terms with any Bidder;
- vii. communicate with any Bidder to correct and/or clarify responses which do not conform to the instructions contained herein;
- viii. cancel, or reissue in whole or in part, this RFA, if ESD determines in its sole discretion that it is its best interest to do so; and
- ix. extend the term of any agreement on terms consistent with this RFA.

ESD may exercise the foregoing rights at any time without notice and without liability to any responding firm or any other party for its expenses incurred in preparation of responses hereto or otherwise. All costs associated with responding to this RFA will be at the sole cost and expense of the Bidder.

All information submitted in response to this RFA is subject to the Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”), which generally mandates the disclosure of documents in the possession of ESD upon the request of any person unless the content of the document falls under a specific exemption to disclosure. In addition, Proposals may be discussed at meetings of the ESD Directors, which meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Law.

ESD reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to retain and use all the materials and information, and the ideas and suggestions therein, submitted in response to this solicitation (collectively, the “Response Information”) for any purpose. By submitting an application, each Respondent waives any and all claims against ESD relating to ESD’s retention or use of the Response Information.

V. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

This section contains additional information about the forms that are required to be included in each Bidder’s submission pursuant to Section VI of this RFA, as well as information about ESD’s procurement requirements.

1) Conflicts of Interest

Respondent must attest it has read, understood and will comply with the following provisions <https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/Conflict-of-Interest-Attestation-June-2019.pdf>. ESD shall have the right to disqualify any respondent to this RFP or terminate any contract entered into as a result of this RFP should ESD determine that the Respondent has violated any of these requirements.

- A. Gifts and Offers of Employment:** Respondent has not and shall not during this procurement and during the negotiation of any contract resulting from this procurement, offer to any employee, member or director of ESD, any gift, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or in any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the offer was intended to influence said employee, member or director, or could reasonably be expected to influence said employee, member or director, in the performance of the official duty of said employee, member or director or was intended as a reward for any official action on the part of said employee, member or director. Respondent may not make any offers of employment or discuss the possibility of such offers with any employee, member or director of ESD who is involved in this procurement and/or resulting contract negotiation within at least 30 days from the time that the employee's involvement in this matter closed.
- B. Disclosure of Potential Conflicts:** Respondent shall disclose any existing or contemplated relationship with any other person or entity, including relationships with any member, shareholders of 5% or more, parent, subsidiary, or affiliated firm, which would constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety, relating to other clients/customers/employers of the Respondent or former officers and employees of ESD, in connection with your rendering services enumerated in this RFP. If a conflict does or might exist, Respondent must describe how it would eliminate or prevent it.

Disclosure of Ethics Investigations: Respondent must disclose whether it, or any of its members, shareholders of 5% or more, parents, affiliates, or subsidiaries, have been the subject of any ongoing investigation or disciplinary action by the New York State Commission on Public Integrity or its predecessor State entities (collectively, "Commission"), and if so, a description must be included indicating how any matter before the Commission was resolved or whether it remains unresolved.

2) Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire

All Respondents to this RFA must be "responsible," which in this context means that they must have the requisite financial ability, organizational capacity and legal authority to carry out its obligations under this RFA, and in addition must demonstrate that both the Respondent and its principals have and will maintain the level of integrity needed to contract with New York State entities such as ESD. Further, the Respondent must show satisfactory performance of all prior government contracts. Accordingly, the contract to be entered into between ESD and the Respondent, if any, shall include clauses providing that the Respondent remain "responsible" throughout the term of the contract, that ESD may suspend the contract if information is discovered that calls into question the responsibility of the contracting party, and that ESD may terminate the contract

based on a determination that the contracting party is non-responsible. On request, model language to this effect will be provided to any Respondent to this RFA.

To assist in the determination of responsibility, ESD requires that all respondents to this RFA register in the State's Vendor Responsibility System ("Vend-Rep System"). The Vend-Rep System allows business entities to enter and maintain their Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire information in a secure, centralized database. New York State Procurement Law requires that state agencies award contracts only to responsible vendors. Respondents are to file the required Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire online via the Vend-Rep System or may choose to complete and submit a paper questionnaire. Please include a copy of your Vend-Rep submission receipt or paper questionnaire with your application.

To enroll in and use the Vend-Rep System, see the System Instructions available at www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep or go directly to the Vend-Rep system online at <https://portal.osc.state.ny.us>. For direct Vend-Rep System user assistance, the Office of the State Comptroller's Help Desk may be reached at 866-370-4672 or 518-408-4672 or by email at helpdesk@osc.state.ny.us.

Respondents opting to file a paper questionnaire can obtain the appropriate questionnaire from the Vend-Rep website (http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/forms_vendor.htm) and execute accordingly pertaining to the company's trade industry. Per the website, respondents are to "Select the questionnaire which best matches the business type (either For-Profit or Not-For-Profit) and business activity (Construction or Other)."

3) W-9 Form

Provide a completed W-9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>), submit with proposal.

VI. Appendices to this RFA

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms Used

Appendix B – Required Forms (Documents must be provided with the proposal)

Appendix C – Contractual Requirement Forms (Documents must be provided with the proposal)

Appendix A

Glossary of Terms Used Throughout the RFA

The following definitions apply to the terms used in this RFA. Terms defined herein are capitalized throughout the text of the RFA. Terms used within a definition that are also defined in this appendix are noted in italics.

Applicant: An eligible Partner, Partner Organization, University, or University-Affiliated Research Institute, or a collection of such institutions requesting designation as an SBIR Center under this RFA.

Authorized Organizational Representative: The institution's duly authorized representative with authority to enter legal agreements on behalf of, and commit resources of, the organization.

Award Recipient/Grantee: An Applicant that is selected for award by ESD under this RFA.

Cost Share Funds: A non-reimbursable component of a project's total cost that is reflective of the Applicant's and industry's commitment to the program. Refer to Section I.E. of this RFA for specific Matching Funds requirements.

ESD: Empire State Development is the umbrella organization for economic development activity in New York State involving both Department of Economic Development (DED) and a public authority in the form of Empire State Development Corporation; however, awards (contracts) through this competition will be administered by (through) DED.

Indirect Cost(s) or Indirect Cost Rate: Defined by Federal OMB Circular A-87 as the rate used for allocating those common costs that cannot be specifically allocated to a particular project or activity. A cost may not be allocated as an Indirect Cost if any other cost incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances has been assigned as a direct cost.

New York State Company, New York Company or Company in New York: A for-profit enterprise with a permanent place of business located in New York State employing a full-time workforce. The company's New York facility must either be (1) the intended recipient of the Center's assistance or (2) directly benefit from the Center's assistance. The Center's assistance must also demonstrably enhance the company's economic activity in New York.

NYSTAR: Part of ESD's Division of Small Business & Technology Development overseeing the Reimagine Workforce Centers.

Proposal: A response to this Request for Proposals submitted by an Applicant.

Small New York State Company: A New York State Company with its principal place of business in New York that employs 100 or fewer persons in total, including any parent companies or subsidiaries.

APPENDIX B: Required Forms

- RFA Application

APPENDIX C: Administrative Proposal (Contractual Requirement Forms)

1. Conflict of Interest Form

<https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/Conflict-of-Interest-Attestation-June-2019.pdf>

2. Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire –

<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/state-vendors/vendrep/vendor-responsibility-forms>

3. Non Discrimination and Contractor and Supplier Diversity Forms -

<https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/OCSD-1-Policy-Statement.pdf>

4. W9 Form -

<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>